

**File Code:** 1940; 1920**Date:** April 25, 2023**Route To:****Subject:** RGNF Forest Plan Biennial Monitoring Report**To:** Dear Interested Parties:

I am pleased to announce the availability of the Forest Monitoring Report for 2022. This report establishes the baseline monitoring for the Rio Grande National Forest 2020 Land Management Plan that was signed in May 2020. The Land Management Plan (LMP) made a commitment to involving “stakeholders and the general public in plan monitoring, including an annual stakeholder meeting with the Forest Supervisor.” (LMP ROD, page 16) This meeting is intended to discuss the monitoring results and what elements of the monitoring plan or LMP may require changes.

The 2012 Planning Rule (36 CFR 219.12) directs that a monitoring plan must be developed for each land management plan. The monitoring information addressed should “enable the responsible official to determine if change to plan components or other plan content... may be needed.” Furthermore, the 2012 Planning Rule states that monitoring question and indicators are designed to “...inform the management of resources on the plan area” including progress toward achieving or maintaining the plan’s desired conditions or objectives.

Forest Service Handbook (FSH) 1909.12, Chapter 30 explains that monitoring forms the basis for continuous improvement of the LMP and the monitoring program (FSH 1909.12 § 31). Public participation in the process helps develop a common understanding and support of the questions; provides opportunities to carryout multi-party monitoring; learn of other available information; and improve the overall program.

Preparing this monitoring report took time. The LMP implements new processes and data that involves valuable partners. Some processes still need to be refined to mine the best available data. For example, questions around vegetation in the monitoring plan rely on the Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) program. The available data often needs to be manipulated to better answer the questions. Some areas, such as soils monitoring addressed in MQ5, still need processes developed to provide a response. The Forest is working to increase technical capacity in the soils program. Monitoring Question 5 is addressed every four years and will have more information in the next Biennial Monitoring Report.

Necessary changes to the monitoring plan will be identified at the annual stakeholder meeting. The next meeting is scheduled for the evening of May 18, 2023 via zoom. Information will soon be available via the Forest web page.

Your immediate input is requested. The 2012 Planning Rule (36 CFR § 219.16(c)(6)) identifies the process for administrative changes. Changes to a monitoring question or indicator is considered a substantive change to the plan that can be made administratively following public comment. Your input is requested on proposed changes to indicators for Monitoring Questions 2



Dear Interested Parties:

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and 20. I am requesting comments on the proposed changes to be submitted to comments-rocky-mountain-río-grande@usda.gov by July 30, 2023.

Thank you for your interest and commitment to the Rio Grande National Forest.



ANDREW KELHER
Acting Forest Supervisor